

TITLE

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR LACING

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

07/11/05
[001] This is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 10/295,520 filed on November 14, 2002, ^{now U.S. Patent Application No. 6,725,575,} ~~currently pending~~, which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/821,815 filed on March 29, 2001, now abandoned, which in turn is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/121,722 filed on July 25, 1998, issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,282,817, the entire disclosure of each being incorporated herein.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[002] The present invention relates to apparatus and methods for releasably securing two or more objects, or portions thereof, in proximity with one another by employing at least one lace which is threaded through two or more apertures defined by the objects or portions thereof.

BACKGROUND

[003] Articles which each employ a lacing system to releasably secure two or more portions of the article in proximity with one another have long required that the user tie together the free end portions of a lace which has been threaded through a plurality of eyelets in respective portions of the article. In footwear, for example, the lace typically is first threaded through eyelets in respective halves of an upper portion of the footwear, and the halves are synched together by pulling upon the free end portions of the threaded lace. Once the halves have been synched together as desired the user ties together the free end portions of the lace to prevent the upper portion halves from spreading apart, thereby securing the footwear to the foot. While alternative configurations are known which do not employ a threaded lace to releasably secure two or more portions of an article together, footwear and other articles which employ such a lacing system remain popular for many reasons, including their ability to firmly and adjustably secure portions of the subject article together.

[004] Unfortunately, many articles which employ one or more laces for these purposes put the user to the inconvenience of having to tie the free end portions of the threaded lace together to maintain a secure fit during use of the article. Often, the free end portions become untied